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ANIMAL HEALTH ADVISORY **After the Flood: Health Warning for Livestock Owners** 19 June 2008

As flood waters recede, Hoosier livestock and pet owners need to be diligent in protecting their animals in the aftermath. According to the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH), flooding can be the source of a number of diseases and contaminants that can sicken or kill animals.

Animals may come in contact with, or through, contaminated feed, drinking water or their environment. Owners need to reduce potential exposures by taking additional steps:

- Remove large amounts of pooled water in close proximity of livestock.

Pooled water that remains following a flood provides an ideal breeding environment for mosquitoes, and other flying insects. Insect-transmitted diseases such as West Nile virus, equine infectious anemia (EIA) and epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) can increase following a flood. Vaccines are not always an option, so producers need to work to prevent disease.

- Provide fresh, clean drinking water.

Flood waters can wash chemicals, such as fuel, motor oil, anti-freeze or pesticides, from other areas into wells, ponds and streams, or even pool in places where animals may drink. Stock tanks can be contaminated and should be emptied and cleaned. Disease-causing bacteria can also end up in these areas. Bacteria such as *E. coli* and salmonella can cause diarrhea and vomiting in livestock as well as pets. Among other diseases that may result from exposure to flood waters include botulism, black leg, anthrax, tetanus and leptospirosis.

- Evaluate feed supplies for possible contamination.

Wet feed and grain will heat and mold very quickly, leading to spoilage (in addition to spontaneous combustion, another possible threat). As soon as possible, dry portions of grain should be removed and stored separately. Dry bales of hay should be moved and restacked in a dry location. Until tested, exposed wet feed should be presumed harmful to animals. Feedstuffs may contain contaminants from floodwaters and/or mold spores that sometimes produce dangerous toxins.

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Silage should be disposed of in a proper manner. Damp silage has an increased risk for mycotoxin contamination, due to poor fermentation, and may also contain higher levels of coliform bacteria.

Producers may send samples of feed and silage to either of the Indiana's Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratories to test for aflatoxins and mycotoxins. The labs, located at Purdue University (West Lafayette) and in Dubois, IN will test for a minimal fee.

- Assess the environment.

Floods can present physical hazards to livestock that should be remedied. Debris may be washed into pastures or feedlots. Fences may be damaged or destroyed. Restricting access to these areas can reduce physical injuries. Dead animals should be removed promptly and disposed of properly as soon as possible.

- Consult a veterinarian.

Producers who notice any unusual illnesses or clinical signs, such as vomiting or diarrhea, in their animals should contact his/her veterinarian for guidance.

Indiana is home to approximately 31 million animals, including livestock, pets and wild animals. Indiana became the first state, in 1994, to integrate planning for animals in the statewide emergency plan.

For more information about disaster preparedness, visit www.boah.in.gov.